The Sunday School Service.

Second Quarter, April 20th, 1884.

Paul's Preaching, 1 Cor. 1 : 17—31. Time : A. D. 57.

A. D. GNAGEY.

GOLDEN TEXT : We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jew a stumbling block and unto the Greek foolishness.—1 Cor. 1 : 23.

Introduction : Paul remained longer at Ephesus than he had expected. The reason for his long stay there is given in 1 Cor 16 : 8, 9, "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." He greatly desired to visit the Corinthian brethren ; but his labors were needed at Ephesus, and he sent Timothy and Erastus to Corinth. We learn from 1 Cor. 7 : 1, that the Corinthians had written to Paul, asking him for advice on the question of marriage, &c., but it seems they did not mention a word to him about the disturbance and division among them, for Paul says the family of Chloe informed him of it, chap. 1 : 11.

To teach this lesson successfully, the teacher must refer to the cause which led Paul to write this letter. The eloquence of Apollos attracted the attention of some, who became more strongly attached to him than to Paul or Christ, verses 12, 13.

LESSON.

Verse 17. Paul does not mean to say that baptism is of no importance ; in Rom. 6 : 3 he exalts it very highly, declaring that "we are baptized into Christ's death ;" and verse 4, we are buried with him by baptism into death. He would not be found speaking lightly of an ordinance to which, on another occasion he appeals so strongly, nor does this mean that he was not to *preach* baptism. This he *must* do, if he would preach Christ and him crucified. And he certainly preached baptism to the jailer and to Lydia, for what would they have known of baptism, if Paul had not informed them. Yet after he spoke unto them the word of the Lord they were baptized. The reference seems to be to the ministration of baptism. Paul's duty was to preach, let others do the baptizing. *Not with wisdom of words ;* not with a display of words. The Greek delighted in eloquent and wise sayings. He made oratory a study. While a preacher may and should have learning and the art of delivery, he should not aim to make them prominent. The thing forbidden here is not the right use of words, the proper word in the proper place, nor elegancy of speech, oratory, &c.,—these are all well in their place, and in fact every minister should pay due regard to the proper use of English,—but what the Apostle refers to, is *simplicity* of speech, and not a vain display of words. Christ's discourses are unsurpassed for simplicity. His language is good, his sayings wise, his expressions elegant, his diction pure, but the great characteristic of all his speeches is simplicity. The minister should make language a study, but when preaching, he must aim at something higher than a show of his "wisdom of words." The cross, the suffering the atonement, the resurrection should be made conspicuous by all religious teachers, and if this can be done with more effect and better results by the use of good English, use it. Christ is the all important person to be held up to the people as their only Savior, and the method that will most effectually accomplish this end, is the *best* method and should be employed.

It is right and proper to use good language in preaching Christ ; it is wrong to make a show of it, The *Gospel* is what we are to exhibit, not the *means* of presenting it. But this is true of other things. A man may wear a suit of fine clothes, cut and fit according to his own tastes, without harm to himself or anybody else; but it is wrong to make a show of it. A man may wear a suit made in the "order," a "uniform" outfit, and all will be right ; but when he wears it as a sign or an evidence of humility, it is *wrong.* The whole may be summed up thus : To make use of elegant expressions in preaching Christ, and to wear fine clothes, for mere show, is pride and covers up the cross. To make use of broken language, to "kill old English" in preaching Jesus, and to wear plain clothing to *show* our humility, is the heighth of arrogance and presumption, and buries the cross entirely. This is to exhibit *self* instead of Christ. Whether you preach the Gospel with "wisdom of words" or not, only so you make Christ attractive, set him forth as the sinner's only remedy, and as God's highest exhibition of love.

Verse 18. The preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that are perishing, because they prefer the wisdom of the world to the wisdom of God. What to the world seems weakness, is really the power of God ; and what to them is foolishness, is the wisdom of God. To us, therefore, who are being saved it is the power of God.

Verses 19, 20. Paul refers to Isaiah 29 : 14 Jer. 8 : 9, Isa. 33 : 18, Job 12 : 27. Where is all your wisdom you so much boast of? For 4000 years human wisdom has labored to elevate man. It has failed. And now you Corinthians appeal to eloquence and wisdom of words to improve the condition of man. No virtue in it whatever. Jesus alone can better and elevate the human family. But this you term foolishness.

Verse 21. The world with its wisdom and philosophy "know not God." All the sages of Greece, the philosophers of Athens, knew not their duty to God. Whatever knowledge they had, they were ignorant of the only true God. Nature may teach us that there is a God. The sun, moon and all the heavenly bodies, mineral formations, vegetable growth, and all nature betray his handiwork. But without his revelation, man can never learn his relations to God, and his true position in life. The light of nature proclaims, "There is a God ;" but our duty to God we can know only through his revelation. "All the stars and the moon cannot make it day ; that is the prerogative of the sun, nor can nature's highest gifts make the moral day arise ; that is the office of Christ. Even the Jew missed this knowledge in so far as he followed after mere carnal world wisdom." When man is left to himself ; when he legislates, makes his own laws concerning his duty to God, then he has only the moon and stars for his guide and these hid behind dark clouds. There is then no sun to light his way. Christ is our only legislator. His laws are our only laws ; we will obey no other in religion. The reason so many believers go wrong is because certain leaders set up a compass of their own, assume the prerogative of legislators and with a presumption that borders on madness, attempt to improve on God's methods. The laws of man regulating his duty to God, have always been a failure. The wisdom of Solon, Sycurgus and others was limited for such a task. God alone could do it, and he did through his Son Jesus Christ. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching." Not foolish preaching. There is much of that now, but there was none then, when God appointed his own servants. It was termed foolishness by the self-righteous Jew and unbelieving gentile.

Verses 22, 23. Christ crucified was a stumbling block to the Jew. He stumbled over the cross, because he could never conceive of the Messiah being nailed to the cross. He required a sign, some imposing show. He wanted God to make bare his arm in some powerful way. He wanted God to overthrow all the national enemies of the Jews, and set up a temporal kingdom on earth with Christ as king, and because Christ declared his kingdom is not of this world, the Jews rejected him. The Gospel they could not accept because it did not conform to their preconceived notions and ideas. There was not enough formality about it. It was too spiritual. They wanted their religion reduced to a thing of sense. Some outward sign by which they could be recognized as God's people ; but because Christ treated them as any other sinners they repudiated his Gospel. The same spirit is extant now. There is a certain class of people who will reject every form of teaching that lessens their chance for power. They love the uppermost seat, and they will accept no gospel that does not grant them the privilege of sitting in judgment over their fellow. Like the Jew, unless they can be chief in the kingdom and all others brought under their subjection, they will be nothing. "Rule or ruin" is their motto. Like the Jew they want a sign, some external badge of discipleship. And since Christ has made love the true badge of discipleship, they will not accept the Gospel as it is, but make one of their own. When men consider it too much of a task to be good, pure in heart, then they hang out a "sign of goodness," which generally is like the word Restaurant written over the door of a whiskey saloon.

Then there was the Greek, *he* would not accept the Gospel. To him it was foolishness. The Jew rejected it because of a lack of power, the Greek because of a lack of wisdom. The Greek was a very polite and refined gentleman. He could not see how the death of one person could better the condition of man. Give him philosophy, eloquence, art, and what does he care for the Gospel. Too simple for him ; wants something mysterious.

Verses 24—31. What the Jew calls weakness, and the Greek foolishness, is the power and wisdom of God, and no one realizes the fact but those who have tried it. All who have accepted the gospel have found it the power of God unto the saving of souls, and the wisdom of God past finding out. The weakness of God is more powerful than the might of man, and the foolishness of God wiser than the wisdom of man.

It is not at all advantageous to be in a great hurry. Multitudes in their haste to get rich, are ruined every year.

From Brother C. Shank.

On account of my present unsettled place of abode, I did not send for the EVANGELIST at the beginning of volume 6 ; but my son did for me, so that lately I got to look over the enlarged numbers. Am pleased with almost every article, with "The Sound of the Trumpet", in particular. It brings to mind reminiscence of the past years. The counts are in purport the same as those, when the first Congregational Brethren inaugurated a course of teaching according to the gospel. The same differences then existed. They were seen and often talked of, but for defference to the dear old church and old brethren, were not so decidedly expressed, nor set so clearly before those concerned. We were aware that to hesitate to expose the errors more fully, was an inordinate effection, that did more harm than good ; yet for the want of co-operation and greater ability, the work was not undertaken. The time and opportunity perhaps, was not so propituous for success as at this time ; many have received their second sight, and the eyes of the multitude are opening to the necessity of leaving the great depravity into which the influence of a few fanatical and ignorant elders have gradually led the trusting and confiding many. It will not do longer, to let the precious time pass, without employing all the means in possession of the Brethren Church, to bring about a full reformation of those who were once so dear to us all, and so near to us in faith, and would be so in practice also, if it were not for the stumbling blocks : Old Brethren's Order, Church Order, and Minutes of decisions of annual and district meeting, which are all superfluous and non-essential to edification and advancement in love to Christ and obedience to his Word. For my part I can see no movement that can produce as much serious conviction as the proposition for a discussion on the differences in practice in the two respective denominations. Let the challenge stand as a monument and pledge for our devotion to the truth, and our willingness to defend it and ourselves at any and all times.

I should have liked the address to include, not the clergy alone but the whole membership of the German Baptist Church. Clergy sounds too sectarian. Would also have liked to have two more counts embodied in the synopsis ; viz :

That the substitution of the hand and kiss, for the laying on of hands at the installation of Deacons, as a perversion of an apostolic practice, according to Acts 6 : 6, and 1 Tim. 4 : 14.

2. That the proceedings in the German Baptist congregations, (of my acquaintance, and as learned from others) in regard to offending and offended members, is a violation of the express teachings of Christ according to Matthew 18,—and therefore cannot be binding on earth or in heaven, let the decisions be what they may.

CHRISTIAN SHANK.

Tracy, Cal., March 31.

Sunday School Convention Work.

There were five brethren appointed as a committee on Sunday School work for the State of Indiana. The following brethren constitute the committee : John Fox, Hezekiah Tombaugh, W. W. Summers, Z. E. Abbott, and Adam Massend, the latter as secretary. We call attention to the matter, and think it is time to commence working it up, as the summer will soon pass over and the autumn draw nigh, and there is much to do, as many stand in need of information on the subject. We hope especially that the committee which was elected to make arrangements for holding the next convention will wake up to its part of the work. A place must be selected and announced, and a program arranged and published. We hope to hear from them soon. Any assistance I can give will be freely rendered. Address, box 478, Elkhart, Indiana.

Our Sabbath school was re-organized for the summer on last Sunday. We are still in lack of Sunday school literature of our own. Should we not have our own ? Or must we go on with the trashy literature of the day ?

D. S. CRIPE.

Elkhart, Indiana.

What They Say.

I think it best not to have a convention this spring ; approve of brother Bauman and Bashor's thought. However we need a better system of ministerial labor. Ministers cannot work hard all week and preach effectively on Sunday. B. L. GORDEN.

We have much need of the EVANGELIST ; it teaches the gospel and nothing but the gospel. I would not do without it at these times for so many shepherds are leading their flocks astray, going beyond the Bible limits. The EVANGELIST is food for the hungry soul.

D. BOWSER.

SISTER E. N. GILLIAM'S COLUMN.

Constraining Love.

Jesus, thy boundless love to me
No thought can reach, no tongue declare ;
Oh, knit my thankful heart to thee,
And reign without a rival there :
Thine wholly, thine alone I am ;
Lord, with thy love my heart inflame.

Oh, grant that nothing in my soul
May dwell, but thy pure love alone :
Oh, may thy love possess me whole,
My joy, my treasure, and my crown ;
All coldness from my heart remove,—
May every act, word, thought, be love.

O Love, how cheering is thy ray !
All pain before thy presence flies ;
Care, anguish, sorrow, melt away
Where'er thy healing beams arise :
O Jesus, nothing may I see,
Nothing desire, or seek, but thee.

In suffering, be thy love my peace ;
In weakness, be thy love my power ;
And when the storms of life shall cease.
Jesus, in that important hour,
In death, in life, be thou my guide,
And save me, who for me hast died.

—*Paul Gerhardt.*

Man's Greatest Work.

The great wall of China was measured in some places by Mr. Unthank, an American engineer, lately engaged on a survey for a Chinese railway. His measurements give the height at 18 feet, and a width on top of 15 feet. Every few hundred yards there is a tower 24 feet square and from 20 to 45 feet high. The foundation of the wall is of solid granite. Mr. Unthank brought with him a brick from the wall, which is supposed to have been made 200 years before the time of Christ. In building this immense stone fence to keep out the Tartars, the builders never attempted to avoid mountains or chasams to save expenses. For *thirteen hundred miles* the wall goes over plain and mountain, and every foot of the foundation is in solid granite, and the rest of the structure solid masonry. In some places the wall is built smoothe up against the bank or canyons or precipices, where there is a sheer descent of 1,000 feet. Small streams are arched over, but in the larger streams the wall runs to the water's edge and a tower is built on each side. On the top of the wall there are breastworks or defences facing in and out so the defending force can pass from one tower to the other without being exposed to any enemy from either side. To calculate the time of building or the cost of this wall is beyond human skill So far as the magnitude of the work is concerned, it surpasses everything in ancient or modern times of which there is any trace. The pyramids of Egypt are nothing compared to it.

And all this work was done to protect the quiet homes of an unoffending people from fellowmen who were eager for blood, and strife, and carnage, and rapine. What a testimony to man's lost condition, what an evidence of the necessity of the coming of the Prince of Peace?

It is nerve destroying to see the bird of prey swoop to the earth and bear beyond Creation's reach the prattling innocent ; but grand it is to watch yon eagle cleave the realms of space and amid starry world's that hang like glittering pearls, gaze with proud disdain on our world's commotion.

A fearful sight to see the Storm King muster his hosts, to listen to the roaring wind, the rolling thunder, the lashing rain, the clattering hail and feel the Cyclone's horrid breath ; but we look through the circling sheen of silver and we know that God will smile again.

How to Make Scandle.

Take a grain of falsehood, a handful of run-about, the same quantity of nimble-tongue, a sprig of the herb backbite, a teaspoonful of don't-you-tell-it, six drops of malice, a few drachms of envy. Add a little discontent and jealousy, strain through a bag of misconstruction, cork it up in a bottle of malevolence, and hang it up on a skein of street yarn ; keep in a hot atmosphere ; shake it occasionally for a few days, and it will be fit for use. Let a few drops be taken before walking out and the desired result will follow.—*Examiner.*

Mrs. Allen a Providence medium, is the present wonder and delight of the Spiritualists. Out of her cabinet issue as many as twenty different materialized spirits of an evening. They walk among the mortals, talk like ordinary visitors, and at times disclose themselves as spirits only partially embodied. But no skeptics are admitted to these seances, and the accounts are therefore not the work of professional reporters.

Thaddeus Stevens once said: "I believe in a God who presides over the destinies of men. I believe men are sometimes born for certain purposes. I was born to cry down slavery. I have done so for years, and God Almighty permitted me to live to see it abolished."—*Oynosure.*